

HOUSE JOINT RESOLUTION 860
By Armstrong

A RESOLUTION to honor and commend the members of the
278th Regimental Combat Team of the
Tennessee National Guard for their meritorious
service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

WHEREAS, our nation was conceived by individuals who were willing to sacrifice their personal safety and concerns to ensure our individual and collective freedom, and the Volunteer State is especially proud to be the home of so many valiant men and women who have performed above and beyond the call of duty; and

WHEREAS, many fine and honorable traditions have arisen from the deep wellspring of honor and bravery possessed by Tennesseans, but there is no finer tradition than that which gave Tennessee its nickname; and

WHEREAS, the citizens of the "Volunteer State" have, throughout the years, willingly forsaken the comforts and securities of inaction by taking up arms against the enemies of this great Nation, risking their lives and leaving their loved ones behind to honorably safeguard the freedoms and liberties guaranteed to all citizens of these United States and vanquishing those who threaten our way of life; and

WHEREAS, established in 1887 by an act of the 45th General Assembly, the Tennessee National Guard is a dedicated collection of the finest men and women this State has to offer. Always vigilant and prepared for duty, the Tennessee National Guard has proven time and again its ability to protect fellow Tennesseans and Americans and those around the world in need of aid; and

WHEREAS, the members of the Tennessee National Guard selflessly serve with courage and gallantry and deserve to be recognized for heroism in the line of duty and model citizenship in our American society; and

WHEREAS, also known as the Third Tennessee/Three River Regiment, the unit was constituted on March 25, 1887, in the Tennessee National Guard as the Third Infantry Regiment; the official unit history has seven annexes to trace individual element history in paths back to different origins, leading to such prominent units as the 630th Tank Destroyer Battalion and the 775th Tank Destroyer Battalion of 1941; the 114th Coast Artillery Battalion of 1942; the 114th Antiaircraft Artillery Gun Battalion of 1943; the 728th Amphibian Tractor Battalion of 1944; the 765th Tank Battalion of 1946; the Third Battalion, 190th Armored Infantry Battalion of 1954; the 130th Heavy Tank Battalion of 1949; and the 176th Tank Battalion of 1954, all of which trace to units of today's 278th Armored Cavalry. The 278th is authorized three Presidential Unit Citations (for St. Barthelmy, Ubach, and Scherpenseel of World War II); the French Croix-de-Guerre with Silver Star (for Scherpenseel); a second French Croix-de-Guerre with Palm (for France); and the Belgian Fourragere (for Belgium and the Ardennes); and

WHEREAS, this regiment of over 3,000 soldiers was mobilized in June of 2004 in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III; the return of the 278th RCT to American soil in November of 2005 marked the end of more than eighteen months of active duty service; and

WHEREAS, the unit is organized for the specific purposes of reconnaissance, surveillance, and security; depending on factors such as mission, enemy, terrain, available troops, time, and weather, a Cavalry unit may be given one mission or several simultaneous missions. It must be organized, equipped, and trained for continuous combat operations on all types of terrain and in all weather conditions, and the Cavalry's firepower, mobility, and shock effect make it one of the Army's most flexible organizations; and

WHEREAS, the returning soldiers of the 278th RCT represent units located in Knoxville, Russellville, Monteagle, Clarksville, Nashville, Athens, Cleveland, Lenoir City, Maryville, Dayton, Kingsport, Rogersville, Newport, Bristol, Erwin, Cookeville, McMinnville, Jamestown, Livingston, Springfield, Gallatin, Jacksboro, New Tazewell, Clinton, Oneida, Lafayette, Sweetwater, Oak Ridge, Harriman, Sevierville, Rockwood, Ashland City, Gordonsville, Sparta, Greenville, Crossville, and Jefferson City; and

WHEREAS, the unit continues its tradition of service under the leadership of Regimental Commanding Officer, Colonel Dennis J. Adams; Regimental Command Sergeant Major James

T. Pippin; Regimental Headquarters and Headquarters Troop, "Smokey," led by Captain Owen B. Ray and First Sergeant John W. Forgety; First Squadron, 278 RCT, "Warrior," led by Lieutenant Colonel W. Mark Hart and Command Sergeant Major D. Gregory Peck; Second Squadron, 278 RCT, "Peacemaker," led by Lieutenant Colonel Franklin C. McCauley and Command Sergeant Major John M. Ridgell; Third Squadron, 278 RCT, "Raider," led by Lieutenant Colonel Jeffrey H. Holmes and Command Sergeant Major James B. Kyle; Support Squadron, 278 RCT, "Thunderbolt," led by Lieutenant Jeffrey T. Archer and Command Sergeant Major Ronald G. Prather; Regimental Reconnaissance Troop, 278 RCT, "Skyrider," led by Major Jimmie L. Cole, Jr., and First Sergeant Daniel L. Jennings; and 278th Military Intelligence Company, 278 RCT, "Outrider," led by Major Robert A. Graves and First Sergeant David D. Clark; and

WHEREAS, out-of-state units joining with Tennessee soldiers also contributed to the many successes of the Regiment's deployment; they are: the 1-128th Infantry Battalion, Wisconsin Army National Guard, "Bulldogs," led by Lieutenant Colonel Michael W. Dosland and Command Sergeant Major Karl L. Schotter; the 386th Engineer Battalion, Texas Army National Guard, "Destroyer," led by Lieutenant Colonel James A. Junot and Command Sergeant Major Carlos Torres; and Company A, 250th Signal Battalion, New Jersey Army National Guard, "Navajo," led by Captain Erick D. Grindlinger and First Sergeant Howard Gaetjens; and

WHEREAS, the 278th RCT was tasked with a four-pronged mission in Iraq; the first objective was to develop a capable and credible Iraqi Army; the 278th RCT trained over 9,000 Iraqi troops, helped conduct basic training for over 10,000 Iraqi Army recruits, mentored the headquarters and staff of five Iraqi Army Battalions, one Iraqi Army Brigade, one Iraqi Army Division, and mentored Iraqi border police along the country's border with Iran; and

WHEREAS, the second objective was to separate insurgents from the Iraqi people and their resources; the 278th RCT worked with over fifty non-governmental organizations, distributed over 25,000 books to Iraqi schools, completed fifty schools and nine health clinics, and contributed to 113 significant infrastructure projects while putting \$130 million into the local economy; and

WHEREAS, the third objective was to influence the population to support the elected Iraqi government; the 278th assisted in two national elections, several provincial elections and numerous local elections; additionally, they took the lead in the formation of city councils, school boards, chambers of commerce, agricultural co-ops, electricity and water commissions, and emergency coordination centers; and

WHEREAS, the final objective was to help develop the Iraqis' sense of civic obligation toward security; the 278th trained judges, lawyers, media, teachers, fire and police departments, and emergency medical responders; and

WHEREAS, throughout their exemplary term of service in Iraq, the men and women of the 278th RCT proudly carried forward and enhanced this State's reputation for bravery and volunteerism as they battled terrorism and supported the establishment of democratic principles of government; and

WHEREAS, the outstanding men and women of the 278th Regimental Combat Team performed above and beyond their "Warrior Ethos," which states in part, "I will always place the mission first. I will not accept defeat. I will never quit. I will not leave a fallen comrade. I volunteer sir! Take charge!" and

WHEREAS, the members of the 278th RCT have proudly upheld the ideal of the citizen soldier, an essential tradition of American society, and their courageous service stands as an enduring example of all the characteristics that have ensured the continued freedom of our nation and the preservation of its ideals over the course of our history; and

WHEREAS, it is most appropriate that this General Assembly honor the brave and noble men and women of the 278th RCT of the Tennessee National Guard, as they have made untold and innumerable personal sacrifices to preserve the liberties we enjoy today and will continue to cherish for generations to come; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED FOURTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE SENATE CONCURRING that we hereby honor and commend the members of the 278th Regimental Combat Team of the Tennessee National Guard for their meritorious service in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom III.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that we applaud the return of the 278th RCT to American soil, and we express our deepest gratitude for the tremendous sacrifices these valiant soldiers have so selflessly made to secure the blessings of liberty for the people of this great Nation.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.